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THE SERVICE EDITION
OF
THE WORKS OF
RUDYARD KIPLING

DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES
AND OTHER VERSES
VOL. II

DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES

AND OTHER VERSES

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II



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THE BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING- HOUSE

That night, when through the mooring-chains
The wide-eyed corpse rolled free,
To blunder down by Garden Reach
And rot at Kedgerree,
The tale the Hughli told the shoal
The lean shoal told to me.

'T WAS Fultah Fisher's boarding-house,
Where sailor-men reside,
And there were men of all the ports
From Mississip to Clyde,
And regally they spat and smoked,
And fearsomely they lied.

They lied about the purple Sea
That gave them scanty bread,

BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING-HOUSE

They led about the Earth beneath,
The Heavens overhead,
For they had looked too often on
Black rum when that was red.

They told their tales of wreck and wrong,
Of shame and lust and fraud,
They backed their toughest statements with
The Brimstone of the Lord,
And crackling oaths went to and fro
Across the fist-banged board.

And there was Hans the blue-eyed Dane,
Bull-throated, bare of arm,
Who carried on his hairy chest
The maid Ultruda's charm—
The little silver crucifix
That keeps a man from harm.

BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING-HOUSE

And there was Jake Without-the-Ears,
And Pamba the Malay,
And Carboy Gin the Guinea cook,
And Luz from Vigo Bay,
And Honest Jack who sold them slops
And harvested their pay.

And there was Salem Hardieker,
A lean Bostonian he—
Russ, German, English, Halfbreed, Finn,
Yank, Dane, and Portuguese,
At Fultah Fisher's boarding-house
They rested from the sea.

Now Anne of Austria shared their drinks,
Collinga knew her fame,
From Tarnau in Galicia
To Jaun Bazaar she came,
To eat the bread of infamy
And take the wage of shame.

BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING-HOUSE

She held a dozen men to heel—
Rich spoil of war was hers,
In hose and gown and ring and chain,
From twenty mariners,
And, by Port Law, that week, men called
Her Salem Hardieker's.

But seamen learnt—what landsmen know—
That neither gifts nor gain
Can hold a winking Light o' Love
Or Fancy's flight restrain,
When Anne of Austria rolled her eyes
On Hans the blue-eyed Dane.

Since Life is strife, and strife means knife,
From Howrah to the Bay,
And he may die before the dawn
Who liquored out the day,
In Fultah Fisher's boarding-house
We woo while yet we may.

BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING-HOUSE

But cold was Hans the blue-cyed Dane,
 Bull-throated, bare of arm,
And laughter shook the chest beneath
 The maid Ultruda's charm—
The little silver crucifix
 That keeps a man from harm.

‘ You speak to Salem Hardieker ;
 ‘ You was his girl, I know.
‘ I ship mineselfs to-morrow, see,
 ‘ Und round the Skaw we go,
‘ South, down the Cattegat, by Hjelm,
 ‘ To Besser in Saro.’

When love rejected turns to hate,
 All ill betide the man.
‘ You speak to Salem Hardieker ’—
 She spoke as woman can.
A scream—a sob—‘ He called me—names ! ’
 And then the fray began.

BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING-HOUSE

An oath from Salem Hardieker,
A shriek upon the stairs,
A dance of shadows on the wall,
A knife-thrust unawares—
And Hans came down, as cattle drop,
Across the broken chairs.

.
In Anne of Austria's trembling hands

The weary head fell low :—
' I ship mineselfs to-morrow, straight
' For Besser in Saro ;
' Und there Ultruda comes to me
' At Easter, und I go

' South, down the Cattegat—What 's here ?

' ~~There—are—no—lights—to—guide !~~ '

The mutter ceased, the spirit passed,

And Anne of Austria cried
In Fultah Fisher's boarding-house
When Hans the mighty died.

BALLAD OF FISHER'S BOARDING-HOUSE

Thus slew they Hans the blue-eyed Dane,
Bull-throated, bare of arm,
But Anne of Austria looted first
The maid Ultruda's charm—
The little silver crucifix
That keeps a man from harm.

POSSIBILITIES

AY, lay him 'neath the Simla pine—
A fortnight fully to be missed,
Behold, we lose our fourth at whist,
A chair is vacant where we dine.

His place forgets him ; other men
Have bought his ponies, guns, and traps.
His fortune is the Great Perhaps
And that cool rest-house down the glen,

Whence he shall hear, as spirits may,
Our mundane revel on the height,
Shall watch each flashing '*rickshaw*-light
Sweep on to dinner, dance, and play.

POSSIBILITIES

Benmore shall woo him to the ball
With lighted rooms and braying band ;
And he shall hear and understand
' *Dream Faces* ' better than us all.

For, think you, as the vapours flee
Across Sanjaolie after rain,
His soul may climb the hill again
To each old field of victory.

Unseen, who women held so dear,
The strong man's yearning to his kind
Shall shake at most the window-blind,
Or dull awhile the card-room's cheer.

In his own place of power unknown,
His Light o' Love another's flame,
His dearest pony galloped lame,
And he an alien and alone.

POSSIBILITIES

Yet may he meet with many a friend—
Shrewd shadows, lingering long unseen
Among us when ‘ *God save the Queen* ’
Shows even ‘ extras ’ have an end.

And, when we leave the heated room,
And, when at four the lights expire,
The crew shall gather round the fire
And mock our laughter in the gloom ;

Talk as we talked, and they ere death—
First wanly, dance in ghostly wise,
With ghosts of tunes for melodies,
And vanish at the morning’s breath.

ARITHMETIC ON THE FRONTIER

A GREAT and glorious thing it is
To learn, for seven years or so,
The Lord knows what of that and this,
Ere reckoned fit to face the foe—
The flying bullet down the Pass,
That whistles clear : ‘ All flesh is grass.’

Three hundred pounds per annum spent
On making brain and body meeter
For all the murderous intent
Comprised in ‘ villainous saltpetre ! ’
And after—ask the Yusufzaies
What comes of all our ‘ ologies.

ARITHMETIC ON THE FRONTIER

A scrimmage in a Border Station—

A canter down some dark defile—

Two thousand pounds of education

Drops to a ten-rupee *jهاز*—

The Crammer's boast, the Squadron's pride,

Shot like a rabbit in a ride !

No proposition Euclid wrote,

No formulæ the text-books know,

Will turn the bullet from your coat,

Or ward the tulwar's downward blow.

Strike hard who cares—shoot straight who can—

The odds are on the cheaper man.

One sword-knot stolen from the camp

Will pay for all the school expenses

Of any Kurrum Valley scamp

Who knows no word or moods and tenses,

But, being blessed with perfect sight,

Picks off our messmates left and right.

ARITHMETIC ON THE FRONTIER

With home-bred hordes the hillsides teem,
The troopships bring us one by one,
At vast expense of time and steam,
To slay Afridis where they run.
The ' captives of our bow and spear '
Are cheap, alas ! as we are dear.

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

(Lady Dufferin's Fund for medical aid to the
Women of India.)

HOW shall she know the worship we would
do her ?

The walls are high and she is very far.

How shall the women's message reach unto her

Above the tumult of the packed bazaar ?

Free wind of March against the lattice
blowing,

Bear thou our thanks lest she depart un-
knowing.

Go forth across the fields we may not roam in,

Go forth beyond the trees that rim the city

To whatsoe'er fair place she hath her home in,

Who dowered us with wealth of love and pity.

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

Out of our shadow pass and seek her singing—

‘ I have no gifts but Love alone for bringing.’

Say that we be a feeble folk who greet her,

But old in grief, and very wise in tears :

Say that we, being desolate, entreat her

That she forget us not in after years ;

For we have seen the light and it were
grievous

To dim that dawning if our Lady leave us.

By Life that ebbd with none to stanch the
failing,

By Love’s sad harvest garnered in the spring,

When Love in Ignorance wept unavailing

O’er young buds dead before their blossoming ;

By all the grey owl watched, the pale moon
viewed,

In past grim years declare our gratitude !

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

By hands uplifted to the Gods that heard not,
By gifts that found no favour in their sight,
By faces bent above the babe that stirred not,
By nameless horrors of the stifling night ;
By ills fordone, by peace her toils discover,
Bid Earth be good beneath and Heaven
above her !

If she have sent her servants in our pain,
If she have fought with Death and dulled his
sword ;
If she have given back our sick again,
And to the breast the weakling lips restored,
Is it a little thing that she has wrought ?
Then Life and Death and Motherhood be
nought.

Go forth, O Wind, our message on thy wings,
And they shall hear thee pass and bid thee speed,

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

In reed-roofed hut, or white-walled home of
kings,

Who have been holpen by her in their need.

All spring shall give thee fragrance, and the
wheat

Shall be a tasselled floorcloth to thy feet.

Haste, for our hearts are with thee, take no rest !

Loud-voiced ambassador, from sea to sea

Proclaim the blessing, manifold, confest,

Of those in darkness by her hand set free,

Then very softly to her presence move,

And whisper : ' Lady, lo, they know and
love ! '

THE BETROTHED

‘You must choose between me and your cigar.’

O PEN the old cigar-box, get me a Cuba stout,
For things are running crossways, and
Maggie and I are out.

We quarrelled about Havanas—we fought o’er
a good cheroot,
And I know she is exacting, and she says I am a
brute.

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider a
space ;
In the soft blue veil of the vapour musing on
Maggie’s face.

THE BETROTHED

Maggie is pretty to look at—Maggie's a loving
lass,

But the prettiest cheeks must wrinkle, the truest
of loves must pass.

There's peace in a Laranaga, there's calm in a
Henry Clay,

But the best cigar in an hour is finished and
thrown away—

Thrown away for another as perfect and ripe and
brown—

But I could not throw away Maggie for fear o' the
talk o' the town !

Maggie, my wife at fifty—grey and dour and
old—

With never another Maggie to purchase for love
or gold !

THE BETROTHED

And the light of Days that have Been the dark of
the Days that Are,
And Love's torch stinking and stale, like the butt
of a dead cigar—

The butt of a dead cigar you are bound to keep in
your pocket—
With never a new one to light tho' it's charred
and black to the socket.

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider a
while—
Here is a mild Manilla—there is a wifely
smile.

Which is the better portion—bondage bought
with a ring,
Or a harem of dusky beauties fifty tied in a
string ?

THE BETROTHED

Counsellors cunning and silent—comforters true
and tried,
And never a one of the fifty to sneer at a rival
bride ?

Thought in the early morning, solace in time of
woes,
Peace in the hush of the twilight, balm ere my
eyelids close,

This will the fifty give me, asking nought in
return,
With only a *Suttee's* passion—to do their duty
and burn.

This will the fifty give me. When they are spent
and dead,
Five times other fifties shall be my servants
instead.

THE BETROTHED

The furrows of far-off Java, the isles of the
Spanish Main,
When they hear that my harem is empty will
send me my brides again.

I will take no heed to their raiment, nor food for
their mouths withal,
So long as the gulls are nesting, so long as the
showers fall.

I will scent 'em with best Vanilla, with tea will I
temper their hides,
And the Moor and the Mormon shall envy who
read of the tale of my brides.

For Maggie has written a letter to give me my
choice between
The wee little whimpering Love and the great
god Nick o' Teen.

THE BETROTHED

And I have been servant of Love for barely a
twelvemonth clear,
But I have been Priest of Partagas a matter of
seven year ;

And the gloom of my bachelor days is flecked
with the cheery light
Of stumps that I burned to Friendship and
Pleasure and Work and Fight.

And I turn my eyes to the future that Maggie and
I must prove,
But the only light on the marshes is the Will-o'-
the-Wisp of Love.

Will it see me safe through my journey or leave
me bogged in the mire ?
Since a puff of tobacco can cloud it, shall I follow
the fitful fire ?

THE BETROTHED

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider anew—
Old friends, and who is Maggie that I should
abandon *you* ?

A million surplus Maggies are willing to bear the
yoke ;
And a woman is only a woman, but a good cigar
is a Smoke.

Light me another Cuba—I hold to my first-sworn
vows,
If Maggie will have no rival, I 'll have no Maggie
for Spouse !

A BALLADE OF JAKKO HILL

ONE moment bid the horses wait,
 Since tiffin is not laid till three,
Below the upward path and strait
 You climbed a year ago with me.
Love came upon us suddenly
 And loosed—an idle hour to kill—
A headless, harmless armoury
 That smote us both on Jakko Hill.

Ah Heaven ! we would wait and wait
 Through Time and to Eternity !
Ah Heaven ! we would conquer Fate
 With more than Godlike constancy !
I cut the date upon a tree—
 Here stands the clumsy figures still :—
' 10-7-85, A.D.'
 Damp in the mist on Jakko Hill.

A BALLADE OF JAKKO HILL

What came of high resolve and great,
And until Death fidelity ?
Whose horse is waiting at your gate ?
Whose '*rickshaw*-wheels ride over me ?
No Saint's, I swear ; and—let me see
To-night what names your programme fill—
We drift asunder merrily,
As drifts the mist on Jakko Hill !

L'ENVOI.

Princess, behold our ancient state
Has clean departed ; and we see
'Twas Idleness we took for Fate
That bound light bonds on you and me.
Amen ! Here ends the comedy
Where it began in all good will,
Since Love and Leave together flee
As driven mist on Jakko Hill !

THE PLEA OF THE SIMLA DANCERS

Too late, alas ! the song
To remedy the wrong ;—

The rooms are taken from us, swept and garnished for
their fate,

But these tear-besprinkled pages
Shall attest to future ages

That we cried against the crime of it—too late, alas ! too
late !

‘ **W**HAT have *we* ever done to bear this
grudge ? ’

Was there no room save only in Benmore
For docket, *duftar*, and for office drudge,

That you usurp our smoothest dancing floor ?
Must babus do their work on polished teak ?

Are ballrooms fittest for the ink you spill ?
Was there no other cheaper house to seek ?

You might have left them all at Strawberry
Hill.

THE PLEA OF THE SIMLA DANCERS

We never harmed you ! Innocent our guise,
Dainty our shining feet, our voices low ;
And we revolved to divers melodies,
And we were happy but a year ago.
To-night, the moon that watched our lightsome
wiles—
That beamed upon us through the deodars—
Is wan with gazing on official files,
And desecrating desks disgust the stars.

Nay ! by the memory of tuneful nights—
Nay ! by the witchery of flying feet—
Nay ! by the glamour of fordome delights—
By all things merry, musical, and meet—
By wine that sparkled, and by sparkling
eyes—
By wailing waltz—by reckless gallop's strain—
By dim verandahs and by soft replies,
Give us our ravished ballroom back again !

THE PLEA OF THE SIMLA DANCERS

Or—hearken to the curse we lay on you !

The ghosts of waltzes shall perplex your
brain,

And murmurs of past merriment pursue

Your 'wildered clerks that they indite in vain ;
And when you count your poor Provincial
millions,

The only figures that your pen shall frame
Shall be the figures of dear, dear cotillons
Danced out in tumult long before you came.

Yea ! ' *See Saw* ' shall upset your estimates,
' *Dreamfaces* ' shall your heavy heads bemuse.
Because your hand, unheeding, desecrates
Our temple fit for higher, worthier use.
And all the long verandahs, eloquent
With echoes of a score of Simla years,
Shall plague you with unbidden sentiment—
Babbling of kisses, laughter, love, and tears.

THE PLEA OF THE SIMLA DANCERS

So shall you mazed amid old memories stand,
 So shall you toil, and shall accomplish naught.
And ever in your cars a phantom Band
 Shall blare away the staid official thought.
Wherefore—and ere this awful curse be spoken,
 Cast out your swarthy sacrilegious train,
And give—ere dancing cease and hearts be
 broken—
 Give us our ravished ballroom back again !

‘AS THE BELL CLINKS’

AS I left the Halls at Lumley, rose the vision
of a comely

Maid last season worshipped dumbly, watched
with fervour from afar ;

And I wondered idly, blindly, if the maid would
greet me kindly.

That was all—the rest was settled by the clinking
tonga-bar.

Yea, my life and hers were coupled by the tonga
coupling-bar.

For my misty meditation, at the second changing
station,

Suffered sudden dislocation, fled before the tune-
less jar

‘ AS THE BELL CLINKS ’

Of a Wagner *obbligato*, *scherzo*, double-hand
staccato,

Played on either pony’s saddle by the clacking
tonga-bar—

Played with human speech, I fancied, by the
jigging, jolting bar.

‘ She was sweet,’ thought I, ‘ last season, but
’twere surely wild unreason

‘ Such a tiny hope to freeze on as was offered by
my Star,

‘ When she whispered, something sadly : “ I—
we feel your going badly ! ” ’

‘ *And you let the chance escape you ?* ’ rapped the
rattling tonga-bar.

‘ *What a chance and what an idiot !* ’ clicked the
vicious tonga-bar.

Heart of man—O heart of putty ! Had I gone
by Kakahutti,

‘ AS THE BELL CLINKS ’

On the old Hill-road and rutty, I had ’scaped that
fatal car.

But his fortune each must bide by, so I watched
the milestones slide by

To—‘ *You call on Her to-morrow !* ’ fugue with
cymbals by the bar—

‘ *You must call on Her to-morrow !* ’—post-horn
gallop by the bar.

Yet a further stage my goal on—we were whirling
down to Solon,

With a double lurch and roll on, best foot fore-
most, *ganz und gar*—

‘ She was *very* sweet,’ I hinted. ‘ If a kiss had
been imprinted—— ? ’

‘ *Would ha’ saved a world of trouble !* ’ clashed the
busy tonga-bar.

‘ ‘*Been accepted or rejected !* ’ banged and clanged
the tonga-bar.

‘ AS THE BELL CLINKS ’

Then a notion wild and daring, 'spite the income-
tax's paring

And a hasty thought of sharing—less than many
incomes are—

Made me put a question private, you can guess
what I would drive at.

‘ *You must work the sum to prove it,* ’ clanked the
careless tonga-bar.

‘ *Simple Rule of Two will prove it,* ’ lilted back the
tonga-bar.

It was under Khyraghaut I mused :—‘ Suppose
the maid be haughty—

‘ There are lovers rich—and forty—wait some
wealthy Avatar ?

‘ Answer, monitor untiring, ’twixt the ponies
twain perspiring ! ’

‘ *Faint heart never won fair lady,* ’ creaked the
straining tonga-bar.

‘ *Can I tell you ere you ask Her ?* ’ pounded slow
the tonga-bar.

‘ AS THE BELL CLINKS ’

Last, the Tara Devi turning showed the lights of
Simla burning,

Lit my little lazy yearning to a fiercer flame by
far.

As below the Mall we jingled, through my very
heart it tingled—

Did the iterated order of the threshing tonga-
bar :—

‘ *Try your luck—you can’t do better !* ’ twanged the
loosened tonga-bar. ’

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA

DIM dawn behind the tamarisks—the sky is
saffron-yellow—

As the women in the village grind the corn,
And the parrots seek the river-side, each calling
to his fellow

That the Day, the staring Eastern Day, is
born.

O the white dust on the highway ! O the
stenches in the byway !

O the clammy fog that hovers over earth !
And at Home they're making merry 'neath
the white and scarlet berry—

What part have India's exiles in their
mirth ?

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA

Full day behind the tamarisks—the sky is blue
and staring—

As the cattle crawl afield beneath the yoke,
And they bear One o'er the field-path, who is
past all hope or caring,

To the ghât below the curling wreaths of
smoke.

Call on Rama, going slowly, as ye bear a
brother lowly—

Call on Rama—he may hear, perhaps, your
voice !

With our hymn-books and our psalters we
appeal to other altars,

And to-day we bid 'good Christian men
rejoice !'

High noon behind the tamarisks—the sun is hot
above us—

As at Home the Christmas Day is breaking wan.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA

They will drink our healths at dinner—those who
tell us how they love us,

And forget us till another year be gone !

O the toil that knows no breaking ! O the
heimweh, ceaseless, aching !

O the black dividing Sea and alien
Plain !

Youth was cheap—wherefore we sold it,

Gold was good—we hoped to hold it,

And to-day we know the fulness of our
gain.

Grey dusk behind the tamarisks—the parrots fly
together—

As the Sun is sinking slowly over Home ;

And his last ray seems to mock us shackled in
a lifelong tether

That drags us back howe'er so far we
roam.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA

Hard her service, poor her payment—she in
ancient, tattered raiment—

India, she the grim Stepmother of our
kind.

If a year of life be lent her, if her temple's
shrine we enter,

The door is shut—we may not look
behind.

Black night behind the tamarisks—the owls begin
their chorus—

As the conches from the temple scream and
bray.

With the fruitless years behind us and the hope-
less years before us,

Let us honour, O my brothers, Christmas Day !

Call a truce, then, to our labours—let us feast
with friends and neighbours,

And be merry as the custom of our caste ;

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA

For, if 'faint and forced the laughter,' and
if sadness follow after,
We are richer by one mocking Christmas
past.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD

*T*HERE 'S a widow in sleepy Chester
Who weeps for her only son ;
There 's a grave on the Pabeng River,
A grave that the Burmans shun,
And there 's Subadar Prag Tewarri
Who tells how the work was done.

A Snider squibbed in the jungle—
Somebody laughed and fled,
And the men of the First Shikaris
Picked up their Subaltern dead,
With a big blue mark in his forehead
And the back blown out of his head.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD

Subadar Prag Towarri,
Jemadar Hira Lal,
Took command of the party,
Twenty rifles in all,
Marched them down to the river
As the day was beginning to fall,

They buried the boy by the river,
A blanket over his face—
They wept for their dead Lieutenant,
The men of an alien race—
They made a *samád*h in his honour,
A mark for his resting-place.

For they swore by the Holy Water,
They swore by the salt they ate,
That the soul of Lieutenant Eshmitt Sahib
Should go to his God in state ;
With fifty file of Burman
To open him Heaven's gate.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD,

The men of the First Shikaris
Marched till the break of day,
Till they came to the rebel village,
The village of Pabengmay—
A *jingal* covered the clearing,
Calthrops hampered the way.

Subadar Prag Tewarri,
Bidding them load with ball,
Halted a dozen rifles
Under the village wall ;
Sent out a flanking-party
With Jemadar Hira Lal.

The men of the First Shikaris
Shouted and smote and slew,
Turning the grinning *jingal*
On to the howling crew.
The Jemadar's flanking-party
Butchered the folk who flew.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD

Long was the morn of slaughter,
Long was the list of slain,
Five score heads were taken,
Five score heads and twain ;
And the men of the First Shikaris
Went back to their grave again,

Each man bearing a basket
Red as his palms that day,
Red as the blazing village—
The village of Pabengmay.
And the ‘ *drip-drip-drip* ’ from the baskets
Reddened the grass by the way.

They made a pile of their trophies
High as a tall man’s chin,
Head upon head distorted,
Set in a sightless grin,
Anger and pain and terror ,
Stamped on the smoke-scorched skin.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD

Subadar Prag Tewarri

Put the head of the Boh

On the top of the mound of triumph,

The head of his son below,

With the sword and the peacock-banner

That the world might behold and know.

Thus the *samád*h was perfect,

Thus was the lesson plain

Of the wrath of the First Shikaris—

The price of a white man slain ;

And the men of the First Shikaris

Went back into camp again.

Then a silence came to the river,

A hush fell over the shore,

And the Bohs that were brave departed,

And Sniders squibbed no more ;

For the Burmans said

That a *kullah's* head

Must be paid for with heads five score.

THE GRAVE OF THE HUNDRED HEAD

*There's a widow in sleepy Chester
Who weeps for her only son ;
There's a grave on the Pabeng River,
A grave that the Burmans shun,
And there's Subadar Prag Tewarri
Who tells how the work was done.*

AN OLD SONG

SO long as 'neath the Kalka hills
The tonga-horn shall ring,
So long as down the Solon dip
The hard-held ponies swing,
So long as Tara Devi sees
The lights o' Simla town,
So long as Pleasure calls us up,
And Duty drives us down,
If you love me as I love you
What pair so happy as we two ?

So long as Aces take the King,
Or backers take the bet,

AN OLD SONG

So long as debt leads men to wed,
Or marriage leads to debt,
So long as little lunchcons, Love,
And scandal hold their vogue,
While there is sport at Annandale
Or whisky at Jutogh,
If you love me as I love you
What knife can cut our love in two ?

So long as down the rocking floor
The raving polka spins,
So long as Kitchen Lancers spur
The maddened violins,
So long as through the whirling smoke
We hear the oft-told tale—
'Twelve hundred in the Lotteries,'
And *Whatshername* for sale ?
If you love me as I love you
We 'll play the game and win it too.

AN OLD SONG

So long as Lust or Lucre tempt
Straight riders from the course,
So long as with each drink we pour
Black brewage of Remorse,
So long as those unloaded guns
We keep beside the bed,
Blow off, by obvious accident,
The lucky owner's head,
If you love me as I love you
What can Life kill or Death
undo ?

So long as Death 'twixt dance and
dance
Chills best and bravest blood,
And drops the reckless rider down
The rotten, rain-soaked *khud*,
So long as rumours from the North
Make loving wives afraid,

AN OLD SONG

So long as Burma takes the boy
And typhoid kills the maid,
If you love me as I love you
What knife can cut our love in two ?

By all that lights our daily life
Or works our lifelong woe,
From Boileaugunge to Simla Downs
And those grim glades below,
Where heedless of the flying hoof
And clamour overhead,
Sleep, with the grey langur for guard
Our very scornful Dead,
If you love me as I love you
All Earth is servant to us two !

By Docket, Billetdoux, and File,
By Mountain, Cliff, and Fir,

AN OLD SONG

By Fan and Sword and Office-box,

By Corset, Plume, and Spur,

By Riot, Revel, Waltz, and War,

By Women, Work, and Bills,

By all the life that fizzes in

The everlasting Hills,

If you love me as I love you

What pair so happy as we two ?

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

I

IF It be pleasant to look on, stalled in the
packed *serai*,

Does not the Young Man try Its temper and pace
ere he buy ?

If She be pleasant to look on, what does the
Young Man say ?

‘ Lo ! She is pleasant to look on, give Her to me
to-day ! ’

II

Yea, though a Kafir die, to him is remitted
Jehannum

If he borrowed in life from a native at sixty per
cent. per annum.

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

III

Blister we not for *bursati* ? So when the heart
is vexed,
The pain of one maiden's refusal is drowned in
the pain of the next.

IV

The temper of chums, the love of your wife, and
a new piano's tune—
Which of the three will you trust at the end of an
Indian June ?

V

Who are the rulers of Ind—to whom shall we bow
the knee ?
Make your peace with the women, and men will
make you L. G.

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

VI

Does the woodpecker flit round the young
ferash ? Does the grass clothe a new-built
wall ?

Is she under thirty, the woman who holds a boy
in her thrall ?

VII

If She grow suddenly gracious—reflect. Is it all
for thee ?

The blackbuck is stalked through the bullock,
and Man through jealousy.

VIII

Seek not for favour of women. So shall you find
it indeed.

Does not the boar break cover just when you 're
lighting a weed ?

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

IX

If He play, being young and unskilful, for shekels
of silver and gold,
Take His money, my son, praising Allah. The
kid was ordained to be sold.

X

With a ' weed ' among men or horses verily this
is the best,
That you work him in office or dog-cart lightly—
but give him no rest.

XI

Pleasant the snaffle of Courtship, improving the
manners and carriage ;
But the colt who is wise will abstain from the
terrible thorn-bit of Marriage.

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

XII

As the thriftless gold of the *babul* so is the gold
that we spread
On a Derby Sweep, or our neighbour's wife, or
the horse that we buy from a friend.

XIII

The ways of man with a maid be strange, yet
simple and tame
To the ways of a man with a horse, when selling
or racing that same.

XIV

In public Her face turneth to thee, and pleasant
Her smile when ye meet.
It is ill. The cold rocks of El-Gidar smile thus
on the waves at their feet.
In public Her face is averted, with anger She
nameth thy name.
It is well. Was there ever a loser content with
the loss of the game ?

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

XV

If She have spoken a word, remember thy lips are
sealed,

And the Brand of the Dog is upon him by whom
is the secret revealed.

If She have written a letter, delay not an instant
but burn it.

Tear it in pieces, O Fool, and the wind to her
mate shall return it !

If there be trouble to Herward, and a lie of the
blackest can clear,

Lie, while thy lips can move or a man is alive to
hear.

XVI

My Son, if a maiden deny thee and scufflingly bid
thee give o'er,

Yet lip meets with lip at the lastward—get out !
She has been there before.

They are pecked on the ear and the chin and
the nose who are lacking in lore.

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

XVII

If we fall in the race, though we win, the hoof-
slide is scarred on the course.

Though Allah and Earth pardon Sin, remaineth
for ever Remorse.

•

XVIII

‘ By all I am misunderstood ! ’ if the Matron shall
say, or the Maid :—

‘ Alas ! I do not understand,’ my son, be thou
nowise afraid.

In vain in the sight of the Bird is the net of the
Fowler displayed.

XIX

My son, if I, Hafiz, thy father, take hold of thy
knees in my pain,

Demanding thy name on stamped paper, one day
or one hour—refrain.

Are the links of thy fetters so light that thou
cravest another man’s chain ?

THE MOON OF OTHER DAYS

BENEATH the deep verandah's shade,
When bats begin to fly,
I sit me down and watch—alas !
Another evening die.
Blood-red behind the sere *ferash*
She rises through the haze.
Sainted Diana ! can that be
The Moon of Other Days !

Ah ! shade of little Kitty Smith,
Sweet Saint of Kensington !
Say, was it ever thus at Home
The Moon of August shone,
When arm in arm we wandered long
Through Putney's evening haze,
And Hammersmith was Heaven beneath
The Moon of Other Days ?

THE MOON OF OTHER DAYS

But Wandle's stream is Suttlej now,
And Putney's evening haze
The dust that half a hundred kine
Before my window raise.
Unkempt, unclean, athwart the must
The seething city looms,
In place of Putney's golden gorse
The sickly *babul* blooms.

Glare down, old Hecate, through the dust,
And bid the pie-dog yell,
Draw from the drain its typhoid germ,
From each bazaar its smell ;
Yea, suck the fever from the tank
And sap my strength therewith :
Thank Heaven, you show a smiling face
To little Kitty Smith !

THE FALL OF JOCK GILLESPIE

THIS fell when dinner-time was done—
 'Twixt the first an' the second rub—
That oor mon Jock cam' hame again
 To his rooms ahint the Club.

An' syne he laughed, an' syne he sang,
 An' syne we thocht him fou,
An' syne he trumped his partner's trick,
 An' garred his partner rue.

Then up and spake an elder mon,
 That held the Spade its Ace—
' God save the lad ! Whence comes the licht
 ' That wimples on his face ? '

THE FALL OF JOCK GILLESPIE

An' Jock he sniggered, an' Jock he smiled,

An' ower the card-brim wunk :—

' I'm a' too fresh fra' the stirrup-peg,

' May be that I am drunk.'

' There's whusky brewed in Galashiels

' An' L. L. L. forbye ;

' But never liquor lit the lowe

' That keeks fra' oot your eyc.

' There's a thrid o' hair on your dress-coat breast,

' Aboon the heart a wee ?'

' Oh ! that is fra' the lang-haired Skye

' That slobbers ower me.'

' Oh ! lang-haired Skyes are lovin' beasts,

' An' terrier dogs are fair,

' But never yet was terrier born,

' Wi' ell-lang gowden hair !

THE FALL OF JOCK GILLESPIE

‘ There ’s a smurc’h o’ pouter on your breast,
‘ Below the left lappel ? ’
‘ Oh ! that is fra’ my auld cigar,
‘ Whenas the stump-end fell.’

•
‘ Mon, Jock, ye smoke the Trichi coarse,
‘ For ye are short o’ cash,
‘ An’ best Havanas couldna leave
‘ Sae white an’ pure an ash.

‘ This nicht ye stopped a story braid,
‘ An’ stopped it wi’ a curse—
‘ Last nicht ye told that tale yoursel’,
‘ An’ capped it wi’ a worse !

‘ Oh ! we ’re no fou ! Oh ! we ’re no fou !
‘ But plainly we can ken
‘ Ye ’re fallin’, fallin’ fra the band
‘ O’ cantie single men ! ’

THE FALL OF JOCK GILLESPIE

An' it fell when *sirris*-shaws were sere,
An' the nichts were lang and mirk,
In braw new breeks, wi' a gowden ring,
Oor Jackie gaed to the Kirk.

WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID

JUNE 21ST, 1887

•
BY the well, where the bullocks go
Silent and blind and slow—
By the field, where the young corn dies
In the face of the sultry skies,
They have heard, as the dull Earth hears
The voice of the wind of an hour,
The sound of the Great Queen's voice :—
' My God hath given me years,
' Hath granted dominion and power :
' And I bid you, O Land, rejoice.'

And the Ploughman settles the share
More deep in the grudging clod ;
For he saith :—' The wheat is my care,
' And the rest is the will of God.

WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID

‘ He sent the Mahratta spear
‘ As He sendeth the rain,
‘ And the *Mlech*, in the fated year,
‘ Broke the spear in twain,
‘ And was broken in turn. Who knows
‘ How our Lords make strife ?
‘ It is good that the young wheat grows,
‘ For the bread is Life.’

Then, far and near, as the twilight drew,
 Hissed up to the scornful dark
Great serpents, blazing, of red and blue,
That rose and faded, and rose anew,
 That the Land might wonder and mark.
‘ To-day is a day of days,’ they said,
‘ Make merry, O People, all ! ’
And the Ploughman listened and bowed his
 head :—
‘ To-day and to-morrow God’s will,’ he said,
As he trimmed the lamps on the wall.

WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID

‘ He sendeth us years that are good,
‘ As He sendeth the dearth.
‘ He giveth to each man his food,
‘ Or Her food to the Earth.
‘ Our Kings and our Queens are afar—
‘ On their peoples be peace—
‘ God bringeth the rain to the Bar,
‘ That our cattle increase.’

And the Ploughman settled the share
More deep in the sun-dried clod :—
‘ Mogul, Mahratta, and *Mlech* from the North,
‘ And White Queen over the Seas—
‘ God raiseth them up and driveth them forth
‘ As the dust of the ploughshare flies in the
 breeze ;
‘ But the wheat and the cattle are all my care,
‘ And the rest is the will of God.’

THE UNDERTAKER'S HORSE

‘To-tschin-shu is condemned to death. How can he drink tea with the Executioner ?’—*Japanese Proverb.*

THE eldest son bestrides him,
And the pretty daughter rides him,
And I meet him oft o’ mornings on the Course ;
And there wakens in my bosom
An emotion chill and gruesome
As I canter past the Undertaker’s Horse.

Neither shies he nor is restive,
But a hideously suggestive
Trot, professional and placid, he affects ;
And the cadence of his hoof-beats
To my mind this grim reproof beats :—
‘ Mend your pace, my friend, I ’m coming.
Who ’s the next ? ’

THE UNDERTAKER'S HORSE

Ah ! stud-bred of ill-omen,
I have watched the strongest go—men
Of pith and might and muscle—at your heels,
Down the plantain-bordered highway,
(Heaven send it ne'er be my way !)
In a lacquered box and jetty upon wheels.

Answer, sombre beast and dreary,
Where is Brown, the young, the cheery,
Smuth, the pride of all his friends and half the
Force ?

You were at that last dread *dak*
We must cover at a walk,
Bring them back to me, O Undertaker's
Horse !

With your mane unhogged and flowing,
And your curious way of going,
And that businesslike black crimping of your
tail,

THE UNDERTAKER'S HORSE

E'en with Beauty on your back, Sir,
Pacing as a lady's hack, Sir,
What wonder when I meet you I turn pale ?

It may be you wait your time, Beast,
Till I write my last bad rhyme, Beast—
Quit the sunlight, cut the rhyming, drop the glass—
Follow after with the others,
Where some dusky heathen smothers
Us with marigolds in lieu of English grass.

Or, perchance, in years to follow,
I shall watch your plump sides hollow,
See Carnifex (gone lame) become a corse—
See old age at last o'erpower you,
And the Station Pack devour you,
I shall chuckle then, O Undertaker's Horse !

But to insult, jibe, and quest, I've
Still the hideously suggestive

THE UNDERTAKER'S HORSE

Trot that hammers out the grim and warning
text,

And I hear it hard behind me

In what place soe'er I find me :—

‘ Sure to catch you sooner or later. Who ’s the
next ? ’

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

LORD DUFFERIN TO LORD LANSDOWNE :—

SO here 's your Empire. No more wine, then ?
Good.

We 'll clear the Aides and *khitmutgars* away.
(You 'll know that fat old fellow with the knife—
He keeps the Name Book, talks in English, too,
And almost thinks himself the Government.)

O Youth, Youth, Youth ! Forgive me, you 're
so young.

Forty from sixty—twenty years of work
And power to back the working. *Ay de mi !*
You want to know, you want to see, to touch
And, by your lights, to act. It 's natural.
I wonder can I help you ? Let me try.
You saw—what did you see from Bombay east ?

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

Enough to frighten any one but me ?
Neat that ! It frightened Me in Eighty-Four !
You shouldn't take a man from Canada
And bid him smoke in powder-magazines ;
Nor with a Reputation such as—Bah !
That ghost has haunted me for twenty years,
My Reputation now full-blown—Your fault—
Yours, with your stories of the strife at Home,
Who 's up, who 's down, who leads and who is
led—

One reads so much, one hears so little here.
Well, now 's your turn of exile. I go back
To Rome and leisure. All roads lead to Rome.
Or books—the refuge of the destitute.
When you . . . that brings me back to India.
See !

Start clear. I couldn't. Egypt served my
turn.

You 'll never plumb the Oriental mind,
And if you did, it isn't worth the toil.

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

Think of a sleek French priest in Canada ;
Divide by twenty half-breeds. Multiply
By twice the Sphinx's silence. There 's your
East,

And you 're as wise as ever. So am I.

Accept on 'trust and work in daikness, strike
At venture, stumble forward, make your mark,
(It 's chalk on granite) then thank God no flame
Leaps from the rock to shrivel mark and man.

I 'm clear—my mark is made. Three months of
drouth

Had ruined much. It rained and washed away
The specks that might have gathered on my
Name.

I took a country twice the size of France,
And shuttered up one doorway in the North.
I stand by those. You 'll find that both will
pay,

I pledged my Name on both—they 're yours to-
night.

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

Hold to them—they hold fame enough for two.

I 'm old, but I shall live till Burma pays.

Men there — *not* German traders — Cr-sthw-te
knows—

You 'll find it in my papers. For the North

Guns always—quietly—but always guns.

You 've seen your Council ? Yes, they 'll try to
rule,

And prize their Reputations. Have you met

A grim lay-reader with a taste for coins,

And faith in Sin most men withhold from God ?

He 's gone to England. R-p-n knew his grip

And kicked. A Council always has its II-pes.

They look for nothing from the West but Death

Or Bath or Bournemouth. Here 's their ground.

They fight

Until the Middle Classes take them back,

One of ten millions plus a C. S. I.,

Or drop in harness. Legion of the Lost ?

Not altogether. Earnest, narrow men,

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

But chiefly earnest, and they 'll do your work,
And end by writing letters to the *Times*.
(Shall *I* write letters, answering H-nt-r—fawn
With R-p-n on the Yorkshire grocers ? Ugh !)
They have their Reputations. Look to one—
I work with him—the smallest of them all,
White-haired, red-faced, who sat the plunging
horse

Out in the garden. He 's your right-hand man,
And dreams of tilting W-ls-y from the throne,
But while he dreams gives work we cannot buy ;
He has his Reputation—wants the Lords
By way of Frontier Roads. Meantime, I think,
He values very much the hand that falls
Upon his shoulder at the Council table—
Hates cats and knows his business : *which is*
yours.

Your business ! Twice a hundred million
souls.

Your business ! I could tell you what I did

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

Some nights of Eighty-five, at Simla, worth
A Kingdom's ransom. When a big ship drives
God knows to what new reef, the man at the
wheel

Prays with the passengers. They lose their
lives,

Or rescued go their way ; but he's no man
To take his trick at the wheel again. That's
worse

Than drowning. Well, a galled Mashobra mule
(You'll see Mashobra) passed me on the Mall,
And I was—some fool's wife had ducked and
bowed

To show the others I would stop and speak.
Then the mule fell—three galls, a hand-breadth
each,

Behind the withers. Mrs. Whatsisname
Leers at the mule and me by turns, thweet thou !
'How could they make him carry such a load !'
I saw—it isn't often I dream dreams—

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

More than the mule that minute—smoke and
flame

From Simla to the haze below. That 's weak.

You 're younger. You 'll dream dreams before
you 've done.

You 've youth, that 's one ; good workmen—that
means two

Fair chances in your favour. Fate 's the third.

I know what *I* did. Do you ask me, ' Preach ' ?

I answer by my past or else go back

To platitudes of rule—or take you thus

In confidence and say :—' You know the trick :

' You 've governed Canada. You know. *You*
know ! '

And all the while commend you to Fate's hand

(Here at the top one loses sight o' God),

Commend you, then, to something more than
you—

The Other People's blunders and . . . that 's
all.

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

I'd agonise to serve you if I could.
It's incommunicable, like the cast
That drops the tackle with the gut adry.
Too much—too little—there's your salmon
lost !

And so I tell you nothing—wish you luck,
And wonder—how I wonder !—for your sake
And triumph for my own. You're young,
you're young,

You hold to half a hundred Shibboleths.
I'm old. I followed Power to the last,
Gave her my best, and Power followed Me.
It's worth it—on my soul I'm speaking plain,
Here by the claret glasses !—worth it all.
I gave—no matter what I gave—I win.
I *know* I win. Mine's work, good work that
lives !

A country twice the size of France—the North
Safeguarded. That's my record : sink the rest
And better if you can. The Rains may serve,

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

Rupees may rise—three pence will give you
Fame—

It's rash to hope for sixpence—If they rise
Get guns, more guns, and lift the salt-tax.

Oh !

I told you what the Congress meant or thought ?
I'll answer nothing. Half a year will prove
The full extent of time and thought you'll spare
To Congress. Ask a Lady Doctor *once*
How little Begums see the light—deduce
Thence how the True Reformer's child is born.
It's interesting, curious . . . and vile.
I told the Turk he was a gentleman.
I told the Russian that his Tartar veins
Bled pure Parisian ichor ; and he purred.
The Congress doesn't purr. I think it swears.
You're young—you'll swear too ere you've
reached the end.

The End ! God help you, if there be a God.
(There must be one to startle Gl-dst-ne's soul

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

In that new land where all the wires are cut,
And Cr-ss snores anthems on the asphodel.)
God help you ! And I'd help you if I could,
But that's beyond me. Yes, your speech was
crude.

Sound claret after olives—yours and mine ;
But Medoc slips into vin ordinaire.
(I'll drink my first at Genoa to your health)
Raise it to Hock. You'll never catch my style.
And, after all, the middle-classes grip
The middle-class—for Brompton talk Earl's
Court.

Perhaps you're right. I'll see you in the
Times—

A quarter-column of eye-searing print,
A leader once a quarter—then a war ;
The Strand abellow through the fog :—' Defeat !'
' 'Orrible slaughter !' While you lie awake
And wonder. Oh, you'll wonder ere you're free !
I wonder now. The four years slide away

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

So fast, so fast, and leave me here alone.

R—y, C-lv-n, L—l, R-b-rts, B-ck, the rest,

Princes and Powers of Darkness, troops and
trains,

(*I cannot sleep in trains*), land piled on land,

Whitewash and weariness, red rockets, dust,

White snows that mocked me, palaces—with
draughts,

And W-stl-nd with the drafts he couldn't pay,

Poor W-ls-n reading his obituary

Before he died, and H-pe, the man with bones,

And A-tch-s-n a dripping mackintosh

At Council in the Rains, his grating 'Sirrr'

Half drowned by H-nt-r's silky : 'Bát my lahd.'

Hunterian always : M-rsh-l spinning plates

Or standing on his head ; the Rent Bill's roar,

A hundred thousand speeches, much red cloth,

And Smiths thrice happy if I call them Jones,

(*I can't remember half their names*) or reined

My pony on the Mall to greet their wives.

ONE VICEROY RESIGNS

More trains, more troops, more dust, and then
all's done.

Four years, and I forget. If I forget,
How will *they* bear me in their minds? The
North

Safeguarded—nearly (R-b-rts knows the rest),
A country twice the size of France annexed.
That stays at least. The rest may pass—may
pass—

Your heritage—and I can teach you naught.
'High trust,' 'vast honour,' 'interests twice as
vast,'

'Due reverence to your Council'—keep to those.
I envy you the twenty years you've gained,
But not the five to follow. What's that? One!
Two!—Surely not so late. Good-night. *Don't*
dream.

THE GALLEY-SLAVE

O H gallant was our galley from her carven
steering-wheel

To her figurehead of silver and her beak of ham-
mered steel ;

The leg-bar chafed the ankle and we gasped for
cooler air,

But no galley on the water with our galley could
compare !

Our bulkheads bulged with cotton and our masts
were stepped in gold—

We ran a mighty merchandise of niggers in the
hold ;

The white foam spun behind us, and the black
shark swam below,

As we gripped the kicking sweep-head and we
made that galley go.

THE GALLEY-SLAVE

It was merry in the galley, for we revelled now
and then—

If they wore us down like cattle, faith, we fought
and loved like men !

As we snatched her through the water, so we
snatched a minute's bliss,

And the mutter of the dying never spoiled the
lover's kiss.

Our women and our children toiled beside us in
the dark—

They died, we filed their fetters, and we heaved
them to the shark—

We heaved them to the fishes, but so fast the
galley sped

We had only time to envy, for we could not
mourn our dead.

Bear witness, once my comrades, what a hard-bit
gang were we—

THE GALLEY-SLAVE

The servants of the sweep-head, but the masters
of the sea !

By the hands that drove her forward as she
plunged and yawned and sheered,

Woman, Man, or God or Devil, was there any-
• thing we feared ?

Was it storm ? Our fathers faced it and a wilder
never blew ;

Earth that waited for the wreckage watched the
galley struggle through.

Burning noon or choking midnight, Sickness,
Sorrow, Parting, Death ?

Nay, our very babes would mock you had they
time for idle breath.

But to-day I leave the galley and another takes
my place ;

There's my name upon the deck-beam—let it
stand a little space.

THE GALLEY-SLAVE

I am free—to watch my messmates beating out
to open main,
Free of all that Life can offer—save to handle
sweep again.

By the brand upon my shoulder, by the gall of
clinging steel,
By the welt the whips have left me, by the scars
that never heal ;
By eyes grown old with staring through the sun-
wash on the brine,
I am paid in full for service—would that service
still were mine !

Yet they talk of times and seasons and of woe
the years bring forth,
Of our galley swamped and shattered in the
rollers of the North.

THE GALLEY-SLAVE

When the niggers break the hatches and the
decks are gay with gore,
And a craven-hearted pilot crams her crashing
on the shore,

She will need no half-mast signal, minute-gun,
or rocket-flare,
When the cry for help goes seaward, she will find
her servants there.
Battered chain-gangs of the orlop, grizzled drafts
of years gone by,
To the bench that broke their manhood, they
shall lash themselves and die.

Hale and crippled, young and aged, paid, de-
serted, shipped away—
Palace, cot, and lazaretto shall make up the tale
that day,

THE GALLEY-SLAVE

When the skies are black above them, and the
decks ablaze beneath,
And the top-men clear the raffle with their clasp-
knives in their teeth.

•

It may be that Fate will give me life and leave
to row once more—
Set some strong man free for fighting as I take
awhile his oar.
But to-day I leave the galley. Shall I curse her
service then ?
God be thanked—whate'er comes after, I have
lived and toiled with Men !

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

WHERE the sober-coloured cultivator smiles
On his *byles* ;
Where the cholera, the cyclone, and the crow
Come and go ;
Where the merchant deals in indigo and tea,
Hides and *ghu* ;
Where the Babu drops inflammatory hints
In his prints ;
Stands a City—Charnock chose it—packed away
Near a Bay—
By the sewage rendered fetid, by the sewer
Made impure,
By the Sunderbunds unwholesome, by the
swamp
Moist and damp ;
And the City and the Viceroy, as we see,
Don't agree.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Once, two hundred years ago, the trader came
Meek and tame.

Where his timid foot first halted, there he
stayed,

Till mere trade
Grew to Empire, and he sent his armies forth
South and North,

Till the country from Peshawar to Ceylon
Was his own.

Thus the midday halt of Charnock—more 's the
pity!—

Grew a City.

As the fungus sprouts chaotic from its bed,
So it spread—

Chance-directed, chance-erected, laid and built
On the silt—

Palace, byre, hovel—poverty and pride—
Side by side ;

And, above the packed and pestilential town,
Death looked down.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

But the Rulers in that City by the Sea
Turned to flee—
Fled, with each returning Spring-tide from its ills
To the Hills.
From the clammy fogs of morning, from the
blaze
Of the days,
From the sickness of the noontide, from the
heat,
Beat retreat ;
For the country from Peshawar to Ceylon
Was their own.
But the Merchant risked the perils of the Plain
For his gain.

Now the resting-place of Charnock, 'neath the
palms,
Asks an alms,
And the burden of its lamentation is,
Briefly, this :—

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

‘ Because, for certain months, we boil and
stew,

‘ So should you.

‘ Cast the Viceroy and his Council, to perspire

‘ In our fire ! ’

And for answer to the argument, in vain

We explain

That an amateur Saint Lawrence cannot cry :—

‘ *All* must fry ! ’

That the Merchant risks the perils of the Plan

For his gain.

Nor can Rulers rule a house that men grow rich
in,

From its kitchen.

Let the Babu drop inflammatory hints

In his prints ;

And mature—consistent soul—his plan for
stealing

To Darjeeling :

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Let the Merchant seek, who makes his silver
pile,

England's isle ;

Let the City Charnock pitched on—evil day !—

• Go Her way.

Though the argosies of Asia at Her doors

Heap their stores,

Though her enterprise and energy secure

Income sure,

Though ' out-station orders punctually obeyed '

Swell Her trade—

Still, for rule, administration, and the rest,

Simla 's best !

IN SPRINGTIME

MY garden blazes brightly with the rose-bush
and the peach,

And the *köl* sings above it, in the *siris* by the
well,

From the creeper-covered trellis comes the
squirrel's chattering speech,

And the blue jay screams and flutters where
the cheery *sat-bhai* dwell.

But the rose has lost its fragrance, and the *köl*'s
note is strange ;

I am sick of endless sunshine, sick of blossom-
burdened bough.

Give me back the leafless woodlands where the
winds of Springtime range—

Give me back one day in England, for it's
Spring in England now !

IN SPRINGTIME

Through the pines the gusts are booming, o'er the
brown fields blowing chill,

From the furrow of the ploughshare streams
the fragrance of the loam,

And the hawk nests on the cliffside and the jack-
daw in the hull,

And my heart is back in England 'mid the
sights and sounds of Home.

But the garland of the sacrifice this wealth of
rose and peach is,

Ah! *koil*, little *koil*, singing on the *siris*
bough,

In my ears the knell of exile your ceaseless bell-
like speech is—

Can *you* tell me aught of England or of Spring
in England now?

GIFFEN'S DEBT

I *MPRIMIS* he was 'broke.' Thereafter left
His regiment and, later, took to drink ;
Then, having lost the balance of his friends,
'Went Fantee'—joined the people of the land,
Turned three parts Mussulman and one Hindu,
And lived among the Gauri villagers,
Who gave him shelter and a wife or twain,
And boasted that a thorough, full-blood *sahib*
Had come among them. Thus he spent his time,
Deeply indebted to the village *shroff*
(Who never asked for payment), always drunk,
Unclean, abominable, out-at-heels ;
Forgetting that he was an Englishman.

You know they dammed the Gauri with a dam,
And all the good contractors scamped their work

GIFFEN'S DEBT

And all the bad material at hand
Was used to dam the Gauri—which was cheap,
And, therefore, proper. Then the Gauri burst,
And several hundred thousand cubic tons
Of water dropped into the valley, *flop*, °
And drowned some five-and-twenty villagers,
And did a lakh or two of detriment
To crops and cattle. When the flood went down
We found him dead, beneath an old dead horse,
Full six miles down the valley. So we said
He was a victim to the Demon Drink,
And moralised upon him for a week,
And then forgot him. Which was natural.

But, in the valley of the Gauri, men
Beneath the shadow of the big new dam,
Relate a foolish legend of the flood,
Accounting for the little loss of life
(Only those five-and-twenty villagers)
In this wise :—On the evening of the flood,

GIFFEN'S DEBT

They heard the groaning of the rotten dam,
And voices of the Mountain Devils. Then
An incarnation of the local God,
Mounted upon a monster-neighing horse,
And flourishing a flail-like whip, came down,
Breathing ambrosia, to the villages,
And fell upon the simple villagers
With yells beyond the power of mortal throat,
And blows beyond the power of mortal hand,
And smote them with the flail-like whip, and
drove

Them clamorous with terror up the hill,
And scattered, with the monster-neighing steed,
Their crazy cottages about their ears,
And generally cleared those villages.

Then came the water, and the local God,
Breathing ambrosia, flourishing his whip,
And mounted on his monster-neighing steed,
Went down the valley with the flying trees
And residue of homesteads, while they watched

GIFFEN'S DEBT

Safe on the mountain-side these wondrous things,
And knew that they were much beloved of
Heaven.

Wherefore, and when the dam was newly built,
They raised a temple to the local God,
And burnt all manner of unsavoury things
Upon his altar, and created priests,
And blew into a conch and banged a bell,
And told the story of the Gaun flood
With circumstance and much embroidery.
So he, the whiskified Objectionable,
Unclean, abominable, out-at-heels,
Became the tutelary Deity
Of all the Gauri valley villages . . .
And may in time become a Solar Myth.

TWO MONTHS

IN JUNE

NO hope, no change ! The clouds have shut
us in,

And through the cloud the sullen Sun strikes
down

Full on the bosom of the tortured Town,
Till Night falls heavy as remembered sin
That will not suffer sleep or thought of ease,
And, hour on hour, the dry-eyed Moon in spite
Glares through the haze and mocks with
watery light

The torment of the uncomplaining trees.

Far off, the Thunder bellows her despair
To echoing Earth, thrice parched. The light-
nings fly

TWO MONTHS

In vain. No help the heaped-up clouds afford,
But wearier weight of burdened, burning air.
What truce with Dawn ? Look, from the aching
 sky,
Day stalks, a tyrant with a flaming sword !

TWO MONTHS

IN SEPTEMBER

AT dawn there was a murmur in the trees,
A ripple on the tank, and in the air
Presage of coming coolness—everywhere
A voice of prophecy upon the breeze.
Up leapt the Sun and smote the dust to gold,
And strove to parch anew the heedless land,
All impotently, as a King grown old
Wars for the Empire crumbling 'neath his
hand.

One after one the lotos-petals fell,
Beneath the onslaught of the rebel year,
In mutiny against a furious sky ;
And far-off Winter whispered :—‘ It is well !
Hot Summer dies. Behold your help is near,
‘ For when men’s need is sorest, then come I.’

L'ENVOI

To whom it may concern.

THE smoke upon your Altar dies,
The flowers decay,
The Goddess of your sacrifice
Has flown away.
What profit then to sing or slay
The sacrifice from day to day ?

‘ We know the Shrine is void,’ they said,
‘ The Goddess flown—
‘ Yet wreaths are on the altar laid—
‘ The Altar-Stone
‘ Is black with fumes of sacrifice,
‘ Albeit She has fled our eyes.

L'ENVOI

‘ For, it may be, if still we sing
 ‘ And tend the Shrine,
‘ Some Deity on wandering wing
 ‘ May there incline ;
‘ And, finding all in order meet,
 ‘ Stay while we worship at Her feet.’

TWO MONTHS

IN JUNE

NO hope, no change ! The clouds have shut
us in,

And through the cloud the sullen Sun strikes
down

Full on the bosom of the tortured Town,
Till Night falls heavy as remembered sin

That will not suffer sleep or thought of ease,

And, hour on hour, the dry-eyed Moon in spite
Glares through the haze and mocks with
watery light

The torment of the uncomplaining trees.

Far off, the Thunder bellows her despair

To echoing Earth, thrice parched. The light-
nings fly